THE HEATHEN

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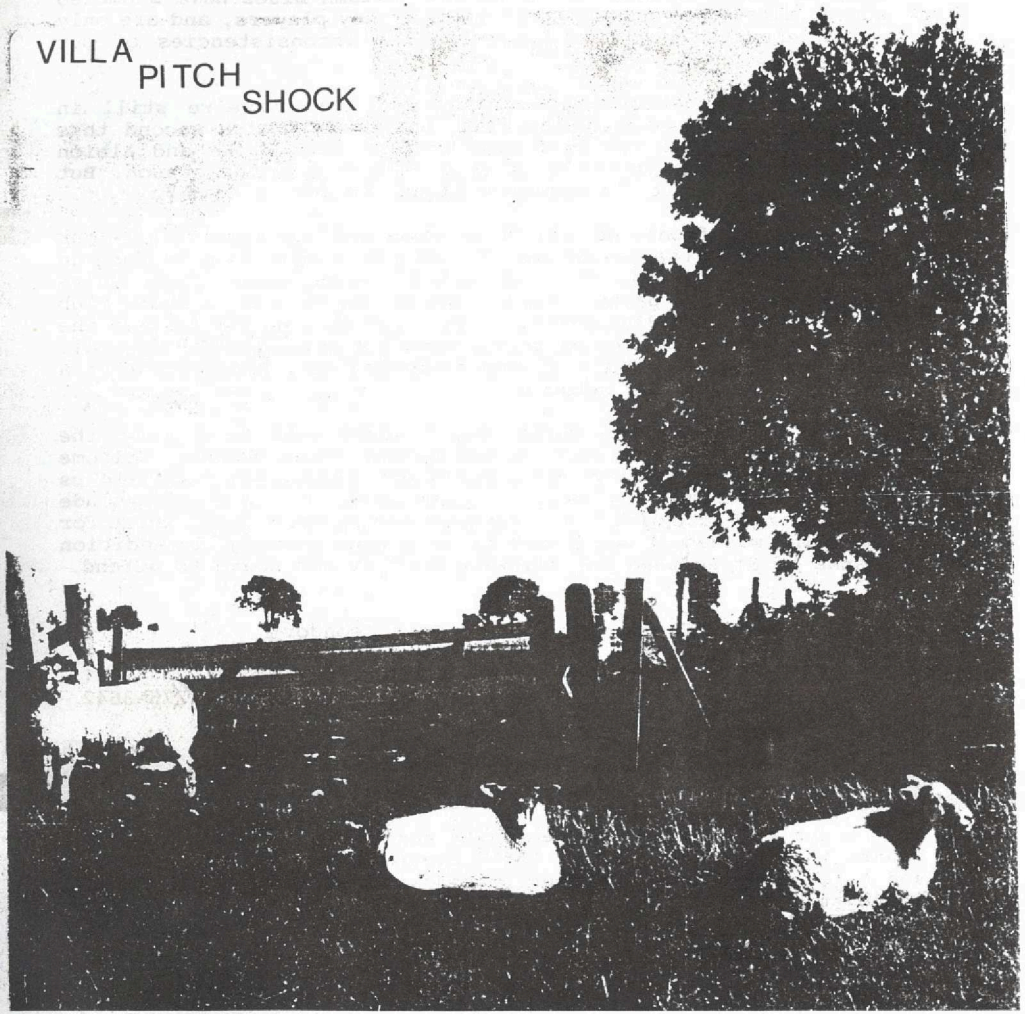
VILLA PITCH SHOCK



Birmingham City

LONDON AREA SUPPORTERS CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By the time you read this Blues should have done "battle" with the Albion and be ready to defeat Orient (where I'm sure I'll see many of you). However, since my last column Blues have stumbled along, albeit not helped by injuries to key players, and are only in an elevated position thanks to the inconsistencies of our other challengers.

But come the better pitches, and as long as we're still in contention, I'm going to predict that we'll finish second this season behind Brentford. I also predict that Stoke and Albion will be fighting it out with us at the end of the season. But Blues will make it. Promotion will not be denied this time.

On the BCLASC front, we hope to be given maximum publicity in our sponsorship of the mascot for the home game against Brentford on Tuesday 10th March. This should be some game. Also we're welcoming over a party from the Norwegian BCFC Supporters Club on the weekend of 21st March. It is hoped that we can take in the Huddesfield game on the Saturday, before playing them at football with our very own BCLASC XI the following day. Please contact a committee member for details.

On the subject of the committee, I would like to mention the election to Vice-Chairman of new member Chris Measey. Welcome Chris. Also to any shy individuals out there, why not help us too. Even limited help would be appreciated. I'd like to conclude by thanking Tracey for organising the Christmas Social, which for those who missed it was a very entertaining evening. In addition thanks to St.Andrews for allowing Studger and Louie to attend.

Cheers for now, Dave Csondor

Chairman. (H) 071-241-2201
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The Heathen is brought to you, in the interests of free speech, by the BCLASC. The articles are not the opinions of the BCLASC but of the. often misguided, individuals; and anyone has the right to reply in these pages.
If you don't like what you read, why don't you try and do better?
Thanks to Andy, Johnny Dude, Mark , Simon , David , Tracey , Richard and Dave Csondor for their contributions. G'day to Paul & Ruth. Thanks to BCFC especially David Teague for their occasionally willing assistance.
Editor: Adrian Brown
Co-editors: Tom Punshon and Karen Brown
Printers: Juma.
Thought of the day Does Liverpool's interest in Mark Cooper mean that Eamonn Dolan is worth £200 000? Nah!

Back issues of The Heathen (91/92) are still available for 50p (+24p postage) each or £2·50 gets issues 8 9 and 11.
Editions of BAD (89/90/91) are 30p (+24p postage), £1.20 the lot.

affairs of the city

Graham Souness was at Stoke, reputedly to watch Paul Mardon (what a good job he didn't get to see a whole game) and it looks certain that he will depart in return for some spending money for TC ... talking of salable players, one popular chap is heard to want a move to a stage more fitting of his talents... while another more contented fellow has visited London to prepare for his future... replacements are being groomed ... and the youth team play Tottenham Hotspur in London ... Paul Tait was described as 'excited' after his goal at Stoke, our ex-manager had written off Tait's career along with Peter Henderson (who was nowhere to be seen)... Roy Johnson has had to quit , not as you might think because of overexposure to Johnny Gayle , but because of the expense of living in Newbury and Brum . All the best Roy ... new physio Paul Heath has injuries galore to contend with...
John Gayle (out again after WBA), Simon Sturridge (back soon), Martin Thomas, Paul Mardon (Knee ligaments) all side-lined and Deano out for the rest of the season... Martin Hicks broke his nose too, but that didnt stop him...
Quite extraordinary! The BCFC plc accounts state that £65,401 was lost on the extraordinary item of "computer equipment re aborted membership scheme".
The Blues are soon to give up playing on Saturday altogether. matches against Bolton (home and away) Torquay and Preston have been rearranged See you at Stockport on Sunday morning. THE LAD.

THE JOHN GAYLE INTERVIEW
by Simon Powles

Following Adrian's interview with Terry Cooper, and Tracey's meeting with Dennis Bailey, I felt I ought to reveal the details of my exclusive interview with John Gayle.

To set the scene, it's October 19th, immediately after the 3-3 draw with Wigan. Big John has been out of action since August.

SP: How are you John?
JG: Alright Man
SP: When will you be back in action?
JG: Can't say Man
SP: Any chance of making the Albion game?
JG: Nah, can't rush it Man

It is hoped that more, in depth, fact finding interviews by Simon will follow in future issues.

HONEST JOHN?

JOHNNY DUDE is the BCLASC's most opinionated member so every year we let him loose on the players. If you disagree with him, I wouldn't be surprised, so write and tell us what YOU think.

The DUDE reviews the first half of the season.

THOMAS
Hasn't come off his line all season.
Reflexes are still first class.
MILLER
A class above Thommo. a First Division keeper Arsenal would never sell him to us.
CLARKSON
Playing the best football of his career. Now looks capable of holding his own.
MATTHEWSON
As solid as ever.
MARDON
I said after half a dozen games that he wouldn't be here long. Best centre back in the Third.
HICKS
Improving after a sticky start,
Looks like a good sound centre back.
FRAIN
Same old Frail. Slow, predictable,
but a reasonable player nevertheless.
PEER
If we had 11 who tried like him we'd be in the First. No ability whatsoever.
COOPER
Plenty of go and guts, not a lot else.
Strikes a good dead ball.
RODGERSON
Outstanding. Depends what scouts are watching to get the best out of him.
TAIT
Back at the right time. Could lead us into Div.2.
Worth a million.
GLEGHORN
Same again for Nigel, we all know what he can do.
DONOWA
Plenty of pace, apparently no brain.
STURRIDGE
Had a brilliant first 3 months, but as usual faded in Winter.
PASKIN
He has showed what he can do, but not consistently enough.

We should go up, but an injury crisis is not helping. The football has been good, by and large.

WINTER OF DISCONTENT

The past couple of months have given us much cause for concern about the Blues performances. Even though we are still six points away from the leaders, we have gone out of all three cups to lesser opposition (Stoke excepted) and have started to lose or draw games we should win.

I was reminded of Dave MacKays comments that the cold, miserable weather was not suited to the team's skillful passing game. Last year, form took a similar tumble around November, winning only one game in December.

The only time Blues have won more than once in December recently was in 1984, and at the end of that season we were promoted. The record was won 5, drawn 1, lost 0, and it is the only time in the past 15 years that Blues have not lost in December.

The best Xmas weeks of recent years have been W-2, D-1, L-0 in 1984 and W-2, D-0, L-1 in 1979. Both times we were promoted.

It will come as no surprise that "hard man" Ron Saunders was in charge during 1984.

Scanning through the complete record, you have to go back to 1951 to find a record of W-6, D-0, L-1 when Blues came third in Division 2.

So is the high ground of St.Andrews too exposed for cultured football ?

Do the Blues players toes turn Blue at the thought of Winter ?

Or is it just a feeble excuse for the lack of success ?

The simple answer is that Sgt.Major Saunders might be called up to run the Winter training sessions.

West Brom tickets were on sale before Xmas, advertised as the "ideal present" (given hindsight not really true) The match turned out to be a 27,000+ sellout, and a bumper payday for the Blues, and this was one occasion when an all-ticket game turned out to be an advantage to those who attended, but what about Bournemouth ? and Bury ? and why was the difficult trip to Darlington made less inviting by the need to commit yourself a week before ?

Well actually, they were not all-ticket.

They were advertised as such, but on the day no-one was turned away, and in the case of Bury it was announced on the radio the night before that fans would be allowed to pay on the door.

At Stoke, home fans did not need tickets, and there was a turnstile for paying supporters.

So what is the point of making a game all-ticket and then not keeping it that way ?

It must put off some supporters who cannot commit themselves for various reasons, or might make a last minute decision to go to a match. The answer probably lies with the game at Reading last year, when the weather was good and an unexpectedly large crowd turned up to support the Blues. By selling tickets, clubs will know how many to expect, and they must prefer to lose the fans who cannot get tickets rather than being unable to cope with large crowds.

So what's my complaint ?

Firstly, the short notice we are given that some games are going to be all ticket. Particularly with having to travel from London; we have to notify members in London and then distribute the tickets Secondly, no attempt is made to see who are the regular supporters, so even if you've been to every other away game you will not be guaranteed a ticket for Stockport - because no-one knows you have been.

At rock concerts, cinemas and theatres if you buy a ticket early, you get a better seat. At soccer matches, they want you to get into the ground early, so the better seats are taken by early arrivals. Ideally, tickets should be an advantageous way of booking a seat at a game, but this season they have been an unneccessary complication for Blues fans.

IVAN OPINION

This season has seen a significant change in the way cup matches are decided. Everyone has their pet theory about deciding drawn games, obviously the best way is to replay until one team wins. Sadly the nation's constabulary have decided after 40 years or so (the last five of which have been virtually trouble free) that they can no longer police games without two weeks notice.

Consequently, the FA cup relays are now set for the week after rather than the immediate Tuesday/Wednesday. Fair enough, but this means that there is increase burden on the "crowded" fixture list. So the FA decided on only one replay (sadly for Blues, the League retained indefinite replays for the Rumbelows cup) with ties to be decided by penalty shoot outs. A brief aside here - the football league is entirely to blame for the Premier League break-away since they insisted on increasing the first division, and they persist with the Full Members' cup despite complaints of too many fixtures.

My pet theory is for replays to be held on the same basis as second legs, with away goals counting as double. If those doesn't separate the teams then the last team to score wins the tie. This will result in either a lot of nil-nil scores or teams going all out to score. Oh, and if both matches are nil-nil then I think the supporters deserve a few penalties, don't you?

Anyway back to the FA cup matches. The Police are not alone in their schemes to change the way we watch football. Forest had to play Hereford on the Sunday because Notts County were at home to Blackburn. Manchester United had to travel to Southampton because BskyB want to show the match (what's wrong with Saturday night?). Charlton had to play on the Sunday because the Hammers were also at home.

More and more games are being relocated without thought for the travelling supporters, most notorious being the long haul round trip to Southampton. Indeed in some cases games are purposefully played at inconvenient times (remember Bolton last year?).

Because of our disappointing cup form this year, you might think that this hasn't affected Blues, but think again. When Blues and Stoke were Knocked out of the FA cup in the first round, why didn't that Autoglass game get played on the Saturday of the FA cup second round? Answer - because there was only 12 days notice.

Tom BROWN

The Blues 104th AGM was my first, having bought ONE solitary share on a matter of principle under the Tired and Weary scheme.
My one share didnt get me a lot of voting power, but it did entitle me to witness first hand the workings of BCFC PLC.
It's hardly a democratic process, but then the Kumar's investment in the Blues does mean that it is THEIR club.

The order of proceedings is pretty standard — reading the minutes, accounts and the chairmans report, with time allowed for questions about these.
Or in the case of Neville Bosworth, time for a Churchillian speech undermining the board, and betraying a somewhat sulky person who cannot get what he wants (i e. Birmingham City).
Several questions were asked about the all too sparse accounts and comments were made that the Blues were only saved from an operating loss by the sale of Kevin Ashley.
Mr Kumar responded that he wanted the club to move toward self-sufficiency and not to have to sell players to survive. He also boasted that if we sold a player for £1million, £750,000 of that would be made available for buying new players (His unfortunate comments about local rivals came on the day that Albion splashed out £300 000 on Bob Taylor).
Mr Bosworth observed that the accounts referred to an independent valuation of St Andrews. He asked who had done this and how much they valued the ground at
The value was said to be between 2million and £2·5million. and there followed a petty squabble about who the surveyors were and why a firm of international repute could not be used.

Further questions about the source of income were met with an offer to "contact us at the club', but it was generally agreed that commercial activities should be broken down into catering, sponsorship, club shop, lottery and the various membership schemes to see where the money was coming from. A perceived shortcoming was the poor increase as a result of our Leyland Daf success. Steve Beauchampé had written in the Argus an estimate of £10 per person who attended Wembley. But the chairman said that the shop had a turnover of £180 000 during the period that could be associated with the cup, and there had been £30 000 profit for the club from sales.
He also added that Bristol City and Tranmere had made around the same amount from their respective trips to Wembley.
The most alarming item discussed does not really have a bearing on the current financial status the sale of rights to Elmdon training ground.

Apparently when the deal was struck Blues received a lump sum from Silkplan for a 70% share of the ground (then valued at potentially 15million) This was deemed good business since Silkplan had more financial clout in getting planning permission What I did not realise was that this deal ran for 7 years and after that Blues get NOTHING More concern was expressed that Blues were not putting sufficient pressure on Silkplan to make any moves but Brian Slater said that it was being discussed with solicitors Permission was given by the AGM to increase the Blues ordinary share issue to 5 million Mr Kumar said this was necessary because all the previous 1.5 million had been sold, and should anyone want to buy any as presents or to give money to the club more would be needed. Unfortunatly the minimum was said to be 100.
Two new directors were agreed, Terry Cooper proclaimed "how about promotion" as his election manifesto, while the more "controversial" Brian Slater said he had retired from the board due to pressure of work and wished to return now that his situation had changed.
There was a discussion of the merits of the membership scheme (billed as an extraordinary item costing 65 410) Which Mr Kumar said was responsible for a drop in arrests and an increase in interest from local businesses Also a few words on the missing Superstadia questionnaire, some creative accounting with the creditors, 500 000 from trade creditors to pay off the bank loan.
With a rousing speech of support from Jack Wiseman and a defiant attack on the 'usual three critics who cannot come up with anything positive' from Samesh Kumar the meeting turned to questions about the team.

While I do not think that questions about the dealings of the club should be avoided in order to remain positive, I can sympathise with the board that certain people do seem to be always undermining the club's achievements for quite different motives though. I am prepared to accept that the board are doing their best for The Blues since we are heading in the right direction financially despite being in a recession, and after all those people with power and money do not seem willing to help out unless they can get their way. In support of the board I must say that they WERE prepared to take a gamble when no-one else would.

Sports Argh!

Oct 5		Shrewsbury Town	1-1	2	7,035	Thomas	Clarkson	Matthewson	Donowa*	Hicks	Mardon	Rodgerson	Frain	Cooper*	Gleghorn	Sturridge
8	●	Luton Town (L.C.2(2))	3-2	-	13,252	Thomas	Clarkson	Matthewson	Donowa	Hicks	Mardon	Rodgerson	Frain	PEER	GLEGHORN	Sturridge
12	●	Stockport County	3-0	1	12,634	Thomas	Clarkson	Matthewson	COOPER	Hicks	Mardon	Rodgerson	Frain	DRINKELL*	GLEGHORN 2	Sturridge
19	●	Wigan Athletic	3-3	2	9,662	Thomas	Clarkson	Matthewson	Cooper*	Hicks	Mardon	RODGERSON	Frain	Drinkell*	Gleghorn	STURRIDGE
26		West Bromwich Albion	1-0	1	26,168	Thomas	Clarkson	Matthewson	Cooper	Hicks	Mardon	Donowa	Frain	DRINKELL	GLEGHORN	Sturridge
29	●	Crystal Palace (R.C.3)	1-1	-	17,270	Thomas	Clarkson	Matthewson	Peer	Hicks	Mardon	Okenla*	Frain	Peer	Gleghorn	STURRIDGE

PEERLESS?

The saddest news of the past month has to be that Dean Peer is unlikely to play again this season because of a recurring pelvic strain which needs an operation. However, we think we may have identified the cause of this injury.
Deano is well known for always giving 100 per cent and according to the team details for the Palace game, he gave TWICE as much.

WHO HE ?

You may remember in the dim and distant past, a player called John Gayle led Blues to victory with two goals at Wembley well the manufacturers of ProSet soccer cards seemed to have forgotten his name already. Or perhaps its the same man having put on about three stone, grown twelve inches, and developed a Brummie accent. Soccer trivia we got it.

RUN FOR IT

CONGRATULATIONS to Louie Donowa, who has made certain that Blues will be represented at Wembley by being the fastest player in the Midlands. Each club nominated one of their players to run in the Saint & Greavsie 100 metres challenge, and Louie outran all the opposition to qualify for the Final at the FA Cup Final.

MALICE AT THE PALACE

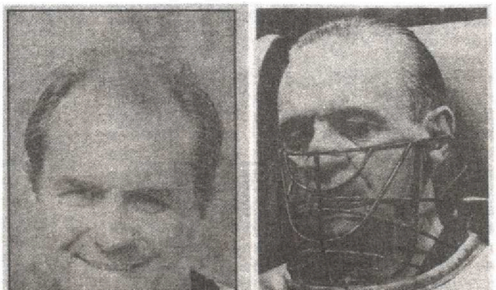
□ You don't want a date with your wife or girlfriend after playing Crystal Palace. It would be difficult to kiss them without smooth lips.
Howard Kendall, *Everton manager, after a fiery match with Crystal Palace.*

MANY thanks for Kevin Day's Diary (December 21), the twin themes of which were Crystal Palace FC and self-abuse. This provides valuable confirmation of a theory concerning Palace fans held by many people born in south London.
Dave Polland
Leicester

□ It's a man's game and men make tackles and I hope men accept tackles without bleating too much.
Steve Coppell, *Crystal Palace manager, after robust encounter between Palace and Sheffield United.*

SILENCE OF THE LADS

After one or two post-match interviews, I bet the players wouldn't mind seeing TC gagged. But look on the bright side lads, think what Hannibal Lecter would have done to your livers after the Palace game.



GOO ON YOW BLUES

Ar Aynock

Not just a run of the mill game, this one grabbed the attention of the national press, and quite rightly.
It was the third biggest attendance of the day, and you knew we were in for some "Big Match" atmosphere the minute you caught sight of the ground.
We met up with Sid and Andy for a friendly pint before and after the game, (surely most of us have friends who follow the Baggies?) but this kind of quiet interaction went unnoticed among the fireworks at one end and the fighting at the other.
They agreed that Blues deserved to win, because Albion had no ideas when their early onslaught came to nothing. For my part. I was dreading the flood of goals that surely would have followed if Albion had scored early on But Mardon and Hicks performed superbly and Blues grew in confidence as the game progressed.
Albion had FOURTEEN corners in the first half Blues had none.
The second half saw a reversal of fortune, with Albion players becoming frustrated - Goodman being booked for a childish foul on Mardon - and Blues players realising that they could play the ball around. For all their possession, Albion only made a couple of realistic attempts on goal after half time.
Blues winner came from a cross by Donowa after he had beaten the left back. Gleghorn headed back across the goal to Drinkell who headed past Naylor from close-range.
When the season ends, this game may not be as important as results against lower teams, but it certainly gives us a psychological edge to know we can hold out against tough opposition.
Albion 0, BLUES 1

WALKY TORQUAY

TRICKY DICKY

This result was as predictable as that in the other ball game going on the same day at Twickenham, though perhaps that sounds unfair on England's rugby players, as Torquay were incredibly poor. In fact they looked odds-on bets for relegation and an early exit from the F.A.Cup in a fortnight's time.(!)

In contrast with the previous two games against W.B.A. and Crystal Palace, the crowd was very subdued - almost like the Holte End in fact. Perhaps the early kick-off was partly to blame as hangovers from Friday night had not had time to clear.

Whatever it was, it soon became very clear that Blues would have to motivate themselves for this one, and in the end they managed to achieve a 3-0 victory whilst hardly breaking into a sweat. It took around 30 minutes to achieve the expected breakthrough, with a spot kick awarded after Nigel Gleghorn's header had been handled on the line. Determined that John Frain would not again deny him the goal his header had deserved (as he did vs. Chester), Gleghorn grabbed the ball himself and dispatched the penalty wide of the keeper.

A superb run by Sturridge brought him his second goal in five days shortly after the break, and this was followed towards the end by a mis-hit 25-yarder by Louie Donowa, which turned out to be perfectly placed as it trickled beyond the keeper's dive into the far corner of the net.

All three goals were greeted with fairly modest cheers, which in a way summed up the whole performance. Torquay did absolutely nothing whilst Blues simply scored three goals. One wonders what the score would have been if they'd really got going.

BEAUTY & THE BEES

JR Hardly

Blues shirts mingled with red and white in the packed noisy atmosphere of the Duke of York. A good BCLASC turn out supped at the usual meeting place in anticipation of yet another big game between the leaders of the Third division Memories of the celebrations that followed our last game at Griffin Park were vivid.

Despite varying rumours of the exact date time and ticket requirements for the game we entered the away end to find it filled solid with a healthy vocal away support

Blues made a fine start to the game with Donowa and Gleghorn looking dangerous on the flanks but high crosses and through-balls were ineffective against the tall Bees central defence. Half way through the first half however, a low cross from Donowa found Sturridge on the six yard line and he tucked the ball away comfortably. The anticipated Brentford comeback was strong with several minutes of pressure cumulating in a weak shot from outside the area taking a cruel deflection leaving Thomas with no chance.

1-1 at half time but we knew a draw would still leave us top.

Brentford made the early running in the second half but our defence, especially Mardon, stood firm. Blues were still causing problems on the break, and a fine ball from Rodgerson found Gleghorn on the left wing. He turned the defender inside-out and fired a low cross into the area. Mark Cooper running in, thumped it on the volley straight into the back of the net in front of the Blues fans. Cooper ran to the joyous throng and great celebrations followed but they were short lived, as a couple of minutes later a ball through the Blues defence, that should have been harmless, was not cleared and a Brentford player nipped in between Hicks and Thomas to slip the ball into the net.

End to end entertainment ensued, with both teams going for maximum points. Chances came in both areas; the best chance falling to Blues in the last minute when Gleghorn's header at the far post was superbly turned away by the Bees keeper.

One point each; Blues still one point ahead at the top and maintaining excellent form. The post match discussions never materialised due to the strange membership scheme introduced by the Duke of York during the previous couple of hours, leaving us to weave our way home feeling slightly aggrieved by the manner of goals against us, but entertained by a game described by Jimmy Greaves as "a great credit to Third division football." Nice one, Greavsie.

Brentford 2, BLUES 2

NOTE: The closure of The Duke of York was due to some idiots smashing a fruit machine prior to the match. the usual MAD hangers-on who associate themselves with the Blues may be quiet, but don't lets kid ourselves that they are gone. Having said that, there was no justification for the mindless attitude of the Local Police (cf LD Cup last year) who insisted that all the Blues fans had to cross a narrow footbridge over the railway line. The home supporters had been given plenty of time to depart, and there was a perfectly good alternative route along the side of the ground.

An (un)witty cartoon about us appeared in a Brentford fanzine. Anyone who has seen the BSkyB coverage of the Leyland Daf game will have seen Ian Clarkson pelted with coins and spit as he took a throw-in in front of the home fans.

"Let he who is without sin cast the first stone"...or coin for that matter.

NICE FISH & CHIPS

400 miles is a long way to go for lunch, but that's what five of us did on FA Cup First Round day.

And it was well worthwhile. A super piece of cod and the best chips I've had outside of Birmingham in years.

The floodlights were good too.

Adrian composed a follow up to 'You'll never beat Paul Mardon'. It is 'Louie Donowa will never beat you'.

Oh by the way, we lost 3-0 and Cooper was sent off.

Simon Powles

Stars 'on 15 pints a night'

TORQUAY players who have allegedly been drinking up to 15 pints of lager a night face a club crackdown.

Chairman Mike Bateson has vowed to act after receiving dozens of letters from fans claiming players have been seen drinking heavily, some during the 48-hour "dry" period before games.

Millionaire Bateson said "five or six" players had been issued with personal warnings.

And he warned: "A player who drinks in excess is affecting his own performance and is in breach of his contract. If we can prove it, they will be sacked."

Exaggerated

He said of the complaints: "Some of those are exaggerated but not all of them.

"I am annoyed because these players are letting themselves, the club and the supporters down. I am not saying we have a particular problem at this club. It is worse at some others.

"We have got some great young lads at Torquay United, who are a credit to themselves and to the club.

"But we have also got five or six players who will never have a successful career in football because they are more interested in drinking than playing football.

"They are totally lacking in personal discipline."

'OLDING ON

Andy Oldroyd

An older player is often brought into an ailing team to provide the necessary experience, and with all the youngsters in our team I've often thought it would be a good idea to bring in someone like Neil McNab to knock the ball around and control the team so they don't throw points away.

Exeter have a number of such players, Williams, Moran and Hilaire providing the grey hairs of wisdom. God help us if we end up like Exeter.

They came looking for a nil-nil draw, and it seems that all Williams learnt in his long career (apart from how to annoy referees) was the back pass.

It may have been hard for Blues to motivate themselves, after the disappointments of Torquay and Palace, but they overcame the spoiling tactics.

Their play was entertaining, and when they had the ball, a goal seemed possible, but as the game drew on it looked like the only reward would be the opportunity to abuse Eamonn Dolan as he did his warm-up exercises.

Fortunately, justice was done when Nigellatched on to a nodded down corner.

It was like celebrating a triumph of Good (Blues entertaining play) over Evil (Exeters negative attitude). Not a memorable game, but twelve months ago it would have remained nil-nil.

BLUES 1, Exeter 0

MISPALACED

Andy Oldroyd

In the first game against Palace Lady Luck deserted us for the first time this season, but it was something we were going to have to get used to

At the start Palace's play looked controlled at the back with Bright and Gabbiadini lively up front but pretty soon, gaps started appearing Twice attacks on the left nearly put Blues in front.

Frain got to a cross ahead of the better placed Okenla, and then a smart run by Louie Donowa gave Axel a chance which he seemed afraid to bury In between these two incidents Martyn deliberately handled the ball outside the box but escaped a sending off

At half time there was a feeling of frustration We had done well, but we should have been ahead.

Palace were stronger in the second half, and there was a period of stalemate before they appeared to score from a Thomas freekick, but Bright who put the rebound in, was deemed to be offside.

Without Rodgerson, play congealed on the left, and with no obvious target man and Tait on the bench there seemed no way forward.

Then, suddenly, Blues were ahead.

Sturridge gave the ball to Clarkson on the right, he made an excellent cross to the box. Martyn came, stopped and slipped leaving Sturridge to nod the ball into an empty net. Blues biggest crowd for ages went wild, and the noise was fantastic The Blues kept up this pressure and Deano headed on a corner to Studger whose shot was beaten out by the keeper only to ricochet off Gleghorn's shin and a Palace defender before landing in the fortunate keeper s arms.

Then came calamity Martyn failed to hold a corner for the first time in the match and as the Palace player tried to carry the ball away, Deano stumbled across his path. The resulting freekick was hoofed forward hopefully and bounced off the back of Bright's head to Gabbiadini who miskicked but it fell to Gray with only the keeper to beat....we were dumbstruck.

Terry Cooper was furious. For all to see on the post match interview he called them brainless for letting it slip. But for three minutes after we had scored we could have beaten anyone.

Selhurst Park. First Replay

After going into the first game on a high after the defeat of Albion, Blues could not have felt worse with the debacle at Torquay only days before and only ten fit men. However the eleventh player, was Paul Tait, and Rodgerson had returned to offer the width we'd lacked at home.

It was cold and windy, but the pitch was in good nick useful when you play it on the ground. The defence was altered from the Saturday line up because of an injury to Hicks, but they were all over the place McGoldrick sprinted down the right, and found Bright with the area to himself, unbelievably, he miskicked.

After more missed chances by him and Gabbiadini Blues began to take control. Tait was superb skillful and comfortable on the ball Studger and Dodger were teasing their opponents but we lacked the finishing touch. There was a narrow escape in the final minute, when Gabbiadini fired over the bar but we were in front all most immediately extra time started.

Sturridge crossed to Gleghorn at the back post, and he scored from the tightest of angles

Foy replaced Tait, and looked confident for a debutant in such circumstances, he brought a superb save from Martyn when he shot from 25 yards Everything was going well The atmosphere was great, the team were buzzing and Deano was outplaying England s midfield. (Only the Police tried to spoil it by shining

Unfortunately, they had 25 minutes to withstand the pressure and after a couple of goal line clearances, Thomas headed in for the equalliser three minutes from time Robbed of a penalty shootout by the League s insistance that cup ties be decided fairly, we would have to do it all again. Crazily, we had to wait until well into the next day before finding out that it was back to Selhurst.

Back at Selhurst, Second Replay

Blues started where they had left off, and soon had Palace pinned back but instead of folding, Palace's response was brutal. They weren't going to be humiliated this time. Their tackling was hard, and at times you wondered who were the Premier league team and who were the spoilers from the Third.

Gray scored from a penalty after Clarkson had been slow turning and (unluckily) caught the Palace player Then Carter flapped at a corner and the loose ball was driven home.

Two nil down after all that good work, many teams would have wilted, but Deano had other ideas. He smashed in a volley just before half time to give us a chance. Nearly 3,000 Blues fans rose to the occasion and the team fought hard to equalise

Paskin was brought in to give some height to the forward line, and it nearly paid off when he got behind the defence, beat the keeper, only to see his lobbed chance hooked off the line.

Palace were a threat on the break, but seemed content to be in front, and Blues kept battling. The Palace penalty area saw some action, but the ball would not fall to our advantage, when it did it fell to weary legs. Martin Hicks came on and received a similar chance to Paskin's, but he tried to control the ball when a toe poke was required The final chance fell to Gleghorn, but he saw his shot blocked.

The game over, we cheered them from the pitch, knowing that we had outclassed Palace in three matches Ah well, at least we can concentrate on promotion now.

PROUD TO BE A BRUMMIE IN LONDON THESE DAYS

Palace know all about us; QPR and West Ham owe us thanks for Bailey and Dicks; Brentford are rivals with us; and we've got Arsenal's reserve keeper.

Fulham and the O's must be fed up with us.

Our only highpoint recently was the thrashing of Fulham at St.Andrews, and a place at the top of the Third Division.

Ian Rodgerson had us thinking about that illusive hat-trick, and we even dreamt of five goals. But we had to make do with 3-1.

Actually the game was close until Rodgerson made it two-nil, and it was even closer when Fulham equallised within a minute. But the third and best goal was served up for Dodger by Sturridge with ten minutes to go, leaving Rodgerson with a couple of hopeful long-range shots and a lust for a hattrick which never came.

BLUES 3, Fulham 1

BANTAMWEIGHT

By Tricky Dicky

With Bradford losing 6-4 to Swansea in their last game, many Blues fans expected to see a repeat of the boring offside and back-passing tactics used by Exeter the previous week. But with the visitors hitting the bar in the first minute, such fears were soon dispelled as both sides gave plenty of entertainment.

This was Paul Tait's first senior game at St. Andrew's since being injured last season at Orient, and on this performance, he had clearly made the full recovery some feared would never happen. He was at the heart of almost every Blues attack, and after Peer shot wide from only eight yards, Tait hit a superb volley which was brilliantly caught by Thomlinson diving to his left.

The former Blues on-loan keeper made an even better save shortly afterwards. Tait's one-two with Clarkson saw the Blues captain fouled in the box, but Gleghorn's firmly struck penalty was tipped onto the post and then cleared. Four minutes later though, Blues deservedly went ahead with Peer making up for his earlier miss by heading home Frain's free-kick. Bradford certainly played their part too, and were unlucky not to equalise when first McCarthy hit the post and then Torpey tested Carter from 30 yards.

In the second half, Clarkson continued to look a good bet to equal Harry Roberts' scoring record for Blues as he blasted high into the Tilton End, and yet soon afterwards something even more rare occurred - we scored from a corner!. Tait flicked on Rodgerson's flag-kick and Gleghorn had all the time in the world to head home at the far post. "We'll be top by 5 o'clock" the crowd sang, after hearing that Brentford were 2-0 down to Swansea at half-time.

Yet predictably, the Bees recovered to win their game 3-2, and they stayed top thanks to Louie Donowa's incredible miss in the last minute. He received the ball right in front of an empty net and no more than two yards out, yet still managed to clear the bar by several feet. The crowd were forgiving though as the points were safe. Its tight at the top and goal difference may play a part. This was a game in which Blues missed many chances. Let's hope they don't regret them come May 2nd.

.....THE DAY WE WENT TO BOURNEMOUTH

by Dave C

Upon hearing my Saturday fixture was cancelled I immediately sprang into action and managed to secure a seat in Andy's car for the trip to the South Coast. Without a single fixture within 30 miles of London I felt rather pleased with myself as I emerged expectantly at Knightsbridge Tube Station to await our chauffeur, Andy.

Imagine my surprise when I emerged to find myself surrounded by the Salvation Army band, complete with tin rattlers. Andy hurry up! Please! Things got even worse when Simon P, Mark S and David O arrived.

The journey passed away uneventfully until we decided to stop at the service station on the M3. Here Simon displayed remarkable dexterity in operating the self-service microwave, so much so I think he's asked for one for Christmas. Then coincidence of the year time occured. At the petrol station we pulled up for, believe it or not, petrol. And guess who's driving the car which stops next to us. Yes its Simon Melville avec wife. Was he pleased to see us!

After a quick beer at the Queens pub we made the quick dash to the ground. Unknown to readers I had gone down to B'mouth for this all-ticket game (supposedly) on spec. Imagine my surprise when I proceeded to the turnstiles, found one labelled "Cash", and therefore avoided the small queue of ticket holders.

For those of you not lucky enough to be there, the game was a fairly poor one, with Blues turning in a lacklustre display and seeming not to relish the contact element particularly on the frosty surface. One of the few high points of this match was a chip from John Paskin over the keeper's head to equalise. But Blues were generally "off-colour" with the attack being ineffective and the midfield generally too slow to support the forwards. So Blues ended up going down 2-1 in a rather poor match, which heralded the debut of young keeper Cheeseman.

The journey home was livened up by the wall of fog encountered around the edge of London, and when detouring to Chiswick for a quick beer, where the visability was down to 5 yards maximum. Thanks to Andy Oldroyd for his driving skills.

SCORE . Bournemouth 2 Blues 1.

F(R)IGHT NIGHT

Harry Carpenter

Welcome to the Potteries for this night of top fighting entertainment as Birmingham "Rocky" City take on Stoke "Bonecrusher" City for the first defence of their undisputed (except for WBA) Associate Members Cup.
6,000 people have a ringside view for what promises to be a gruelling match, and that must be some sort of record for these games
In the Blue corner Ian "Have a go" Atkins, weighing in at 12 stone 3
And in the Red corner, Vince "Mad Dog" Overson weighing in at 13 stone
ROUND ONE
Paul Tait, felled from behind, gets up to follow in the resulting free kick and takes the lead for Blues.
ROUND TWO
Five minutes later Stoke equalise after Rodgerson is nudged off the ball
ROUND THREE
John Frain beats off a rough challenge from Kelly only to be penalised when he comes away with the ball Stoke take the lead from this disputed penalty.
ROUND FOUR
Hicks clears after Blues 18 year old keeper has been beaten.
ROUND FIVE
Overson and Ware are booked for fouls on Atkins, and Atkins is booked for a foul on Fox This is no striker and he has to retire leaving Tait and Okenla up front.
ROUND SIX
Blues defences are down, and Stoke get a simple third. Blues try a late counterpunch but the judges give it to Stoke.
A fighting performance by the Blues, but they could avoid a knockout against Walsall in the next match.
Over to Gary Newbon by the ringside .

Well Terry you've just seen your side beaten by Lou Macari s side, do you feel bad ?
Stoke 3 BLUES 1

XMAS QUAKERS

by Mark Smith

Over 800 Blues fans had made this long trip up North. Luckily I was staying in Sunderland over Christmas, so for me this match was easier to get to than a Blues home game. Although finding the entrance to the ground was a bit of a problem. For the reason of a cricket ground (I think) being adjacent to the football ground the away fans entrance was located over the hill and far away from what I had reasonably assumed was the entrance to the ground. I know clubs try and keep the opposition fans away from their own fans, but this seemed a little excessive. Once inside the ground we found ourselves occupying a slight terrace at one of the corners of the pitch.

Blues were pretty dreadful for the first fifty minutes or so. A defensive error led to Darlington scoring after six minutes and they could've gone further ahead on a few more occasions during the first half. Blues' only real chance came a minute or so before half time. Simon Sturridge crossed the ball over from the right and Trevor Matthewson managed to shoot from just two yards out, but somehow the Darlington 'keeper (Mark Prudhoe, ex-blues) managed to block it. John Paskin collected the rebound at the far post, but his shot was again kept out by the 'keeper.

And so to the second half and what must be the goal of the season so far. Ian Rodgerson collected the ball and made a break down the right, cutting inside between two Darlington players he paused for a second and then blasted in a 35-yard drive from the corner of the penalty area. Prudhoe couldn't do a thing about it.

Blues now started playing some decent football and a few more chances came their way. Two of the better ones falling to Nigel Gleghorn, but Prudhoe again produced two magnificent saves to keep the scores level.

The game finished one-all and Blues could look on it as two points thrown away, although just judging by the fifty minute's performance some might call us lucky. Still, those who had managed to get to the game had Rodgerson's goal to talk about on the long journey home.

Darlington 1 BLUES 1

XMAS PRESENTS

Andy Claus

New Years Day, and a massive headache to accompany us up the M1. Still, it can t have been as bad as the bloke who hit the central reservation right in front of us.

Blues biggest League crowd of the season (above that illusive break-even figure) were greeted by a lack of hot water for that hangover easing coffee. The team obviously had the same problem, as Hull took the lead early on. Everyone dozed as the ball was clipped over the defence to be hooked back to an Aylott lookalike who nodded the ball past Miller.

Despite that, Sturridge and Paskin were showing a modicum of understanding and a long clearance was backheeled by Simon into Paskin who slid the ball under the keeper. The perfect answer to the undeserved abuse he got at Bury. Blues were hindered by injuries and an outrageous unpunished 'tackle" on Sturridge forced himout of the game. Donowa appeared only half fit, but Foley Okenla injected the game with some much-needed pace in the second half.

He had one or two practice runs before, for the first time, his speed was followed with a quality cross to Gleghorn and Blues were deservedly ahead. They gave away the lead immediately.

A freekick defended in the Arsenal fashion, everyone pushing out without bothering to watch the opposition and that Aylott clone had time to beat Miller comfortably.

A defensive error (this time not the fault of one individual - unless you suspect the linesman) had cost us points again.

BLUES 2, Hull City 2

AN APOLOGY

Due to unforeseen problems with the pigeon post the item which was to appear here from our Northern correspondent did not arrive in time. Instead why don't you listen to the KLF's 'It's Grim Up North' and replace the town names with third division teams. Sorry.

POTTERY CLASS

SIMON POW!!

Dave Csondor and I went north on the train with Stoke's London Supporters Club. The reduced fare makes this an economical and enjoyable means of travel, we should therefore be looking at other opportunities to share our travel arrangements with other clubs.

A word of warning though, don't play cards with Csondor - he cheats!

We arrived at about 1.00, and typically found a pub full of Blues fans. A few pints and pie and chips later, we made our way to the ground. There was a large travelling contingent of about 6500, which helped to provide Stoke's biggest league gate of over 19000.

Blues were giving debuts to Beckford (Jason not Darren) and Rowbotham (Darren not Jason), which was mainly due to our huge injury crisis. Thomas, Peer, Tait, Sturridge, Donowa, Gayle were all out, Mardon was to follow later.

We probably just had the better of a dull first half. Overson (who is apparently a donkey now) came in for a lot of stick, as did Macari (who?).

Then at the start of the second half, following good work from Rowbotham and Frain, Beckford scored. Two minutes later, with cries of 'Who the **** is Lou Macari?' still ringing round the ground, Stoke equalised. After Mardon went off we looked awful and it was no suprise when Biggins got the winner towards the end.

There was a crazy incident when Foley Okenla came on to replace Mardon. Firstly he was 'sent off', apparently for wearing black cycling shorts. Then when he came back on he was 'sent off' again, this time because the linesman hadn't taken his number (!!???).

Dave and I managed to avoid the Stoke fans on the way back and I even beat him at cards. So it wasn't all bad news.

NTAMARK OF RESPECT

by Mark Smith

The second Autoglass Trophy Preliminary Round game saw us at home to Walsall. Even though Blues lost 3-1 at Stoke in the first game, we only needed a draw to see us through to the first round. Walsall came to St Andrews on the back of a home defeat inflicted by Doncaster and faced with our seemingly invincible home record. This should have been a formality for the Blues and a chance to gain some confidence following the poor results of the past few games.

This was not to be. A pretty mediocre first half, in which Walsall came the closest to scoring, turned into an appalling display by the Blues in the second half. The entire team seemed not to care. There was no effort, no thought - nothing. If Blues were attempting to play for a draw it was a pretty stupid thing to do. It was no surprise when Walsall eventually scored, it was also no surprise when Blues failed to reply with a goal.

The game ended with Walsall celebrating a deserved victory and the Blues skulking off the pitch to a chorus of "What a load of rubbish". I have not seen the Blues play this dreadful (even worse than at Torquay) for some time. We had been knocked out at the first hurdle of the trophy (albeit in a different guise) that we had won last year. It was a sad night.

BLUES 0 Walsall 1

HERE'S ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE LOOK AT THE BLUES, THIS TIME FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD. AS USUAL, WE INVITE MATCH REPORTS FROM ANY INTERESTED PEOPLE. THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE HEATHEN WILL START WITH SWANSEA AWAY
AND THE DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IS APRIL 6th.

OZ COMES TO THE O'S

Paul Myvalt

Note: FOR 'SOCCER' READ 'FOOTBALL'
What does a visiting Antipodean do when he goes to the soccer in England?
Does he just watch it?
No, he experiences it.
Sitting on an express bus to Birmingham for my first match, I had time to reflect on my perceptions of this sport which were soon to become revised. Soccer in my country has always had a somewhat secondary status (on a par with watching grass grow) often frequented by small crowds of Greeks or Italians, and constantly fuelling arguments between Serbs and Croats To play the game in preference to Australian rules or Rugby was frowned upon and persons who defected across were constantly ostracized by the "gentlemen" of Rugby.
I went to a school where Rugby was King, and while I consider it a great sport (had it knocked into me) soccer from England was always watched with enjoyment and awe. Mind you all we get to see at home is the glory of the FA Cup final and occasional highlights - at three in the morning definitely for diehards.
So with all that in mind I was still technically a virgin (although I had done some "heavy petting' at Crystal Palace in November, but I didn t get in then).
Ah, Birmingham, industrial heartland of the Midlands, second biggest city of the UK and home of the Blues. Firstly to the Pub, a tradition that Australians are fond of whatever the sport; in fact a sport in itself A few pints later a chill in the air but warm in the belly I joined the fanatics in the stand
To describe the atmosphere as exciting would be an understatement, it was surely electric. Even the minute number of Orient fans undaunted by the sea of Blues fans surrounding them gave voice to their support.
To the sound of many songs and chants (heard before, but without the benefit of knowing the words); the heckles and jeers ; the camaraderie of the supporters ; the jubilation of scoring; the silence of being scored against and the cries of expletives I watched this great event
This was something that I doubt I would experience again for soon I would become one of the shouters, chanters, singers and drinkers.
Hopefully, someday, standing next to me, some other Aussie will lose their virginty to the glory of English football (read soccer)
Incidental for me, the score was a two-all draw, but there was clearly one winner.

CLICHE ALERT... CLICHE ALERT... CLICHE ALERT... CLICHE ALERT...

... the sport itself and I should add cultural relations.

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE ?

We have made regular pleas in these pages for more contributions or even letters of comment, praise or criticism, but in fact we have recieved very little response.
We even considered making letters up to encourage you to write, but rather than fraud we have opted for positive role models.
Here are some letters which were sent to The Leyton Orientear over the past year, they show what sort of thing we would like, but really any letters will get published as long as they are not detrimental to the tone of the publication:

For the Orientear, I would like to suggest a closer analysis of the tactics played and why certain players are picked. It really amazes me that the supporters get no explanation from the club as to why tactics used are so inefficient, ie the defender is 6'6" tall, the striker 5', sending long, high balls into the area, and justifying it by saying "commitment was good," "we didn't get the breaks," etc.

How can fanzines, and supporters in general, call for more accountability whether it be team choice, police interferance, matches switched, TV never showing anyone but the First Division, eh? Does the Orientear have any ideas on how we can encourage feedback from the clubs?

On a lighter note, have you noticed how the worst, least-skilled and ugliest players continually loom into view when a goal is celebrated or a cup lifted? Brian Kilcline, Steve Bruce and Alan Harper all spring to mind, but none more so than the ugliest passer-back of them all - Gary Ablett. It's bad enough Liverpool winning (my wife is an Evertonian) but it really rankles when a player of Ablett's ability rubs it in. Frank Clark must have been a past candidate, and Newport County were full of them, except for sweet Tommy Tynan.
TONY WILLIAMS
SOUTHBOURNE

** Your point of bigger involvement with supporters is one we all feel, but fanzines were formed originally to give us a voice we never previously had, and sadly, it appears that our only real communication with our respective clubs is through the mags we produce.Sad as it is, I feel it's as close as we are ever going to get..Ed.

Dear Orientear,
The B.B.C. have recently repeated the comedy series 'Porridge', but I wonder how many of you are aware of hero Norman Stanley Fletcher's football allegiances. In the subsequent B.B.C. series 'Going Straight', the O's name crops up on several occassions.

Having lost his sex drive on returning from Slade Prison Fletch admits to being "more interested in Orient's crippling injury list" (Episode 3). Later the disillusioned ex-con treats with scorn the suggestion of his daughter, Ingrid, to take a trip down Brisbane Road with the lines;
"I lost my fundamental belief in mankind. And that certainly ain't going to be restored by seeing Orient play Mansfield Town".

I came across these references in an Open University text book on television and popular culture, which contains a section on 'Going Straight'. I wonder if any other O's fans have tales to relate of their in popular British comedies, higher education textbooks or indeed great clashes with our Nottinghamshire rivals.
ALAN BULLIMORE

Dear Orientear,
This could be prat of the year suggestion, but why don't Leyton Orient supporters twin up with another club in the English or Scottish league like towns do.

Any suggestions - not London clubs - as to which team we could pair up with and why, ie best away trip, friendliest locals, decent police, food and pubs, etc.

My choice would be Partick Thistle, a club of similar size to Leyton Orient.
TURNIP TOWNSEND

Dear Orientear,
Eeh, good match, eeh, great match, eeh, fantastic match. Did we win, nay, don't be daft. Well this is a new season. No it isn't, it's the same as last, thou cynical accent.

RiddleR

Leyton Orient 1 Birmingham City 1

How did we not win this one? The first half was all one way traffic with the red tide bearing down on the Blues goal. Brum were rocked straight off when young Paul Tait challenged with Sitts and came out of it with a badly broken leg. It looked like the damage was more down to the way Tait fell than because of any maliciousness on Sitton's part. It's been sad to hear since that Paul Tait may not be able to play again - only time will tell, but it was a bit of a downer for City

Dear Orientear,
Watching a recent match at Brisbane Road, I heard some people in the crowd saying that the players were a bunch of women. So I looked at the team sheet, and suddenly, the names swam before my eyes, and I saw the following:-

1. Paula Held.
2. Vera T Beeks
3. Betty Una Wren
4. Sheila Venk
5. Katy Hide
6. Jo Shonnitt
7. Vera Heeley
8. Eve Cattless
9. Pam O' Rocker
10. Sandra Yey
11. Anne Drycart

Subs: Diane B With-Radar
Chloe Lardd
Manager: Fran K Clark
Assistant: Petra Cutesee
Trainer: Shirl Bongslut.
ANNA GRAM (Miss)

SECS TALK

So it appears that the bubble has burst, and my optimism in the last issue was perhaps premature Away defeats that should have been draws and home draws that should have been wins (Walsall doesn't count - we're concentrating on the League;) have seen Blues slide into a play off position. Not having seen a game since we outplayed Palace for the third time, I am not in a position to comment on recent affairs, only that injuries to the key men have not helped to sustain the consistency and understanding that was evident before the Christmas period.

Encouragingly, the home crowds are still five-figured and just as vocal. With this in mind, I have listed 5 of the most popular "sayings" thus far this season:

1. "Who the hell is Lou Macari" (or words to that effect)
2. "Goooo-on Louie.....Goooo-on" etc.
3. "Yours Hicks. Hicks? Hicks you *@*#!!
4. "Nice ball Rodger(my)son, nice ball son"
5. "We're going to win the League".(My favourite).

Our esteemed editor's right to edit any article published, forces me to omit his comments about certain men in black this season.
(Editor's note:In the interests of fair play, Jon may be referring to my belief that a certain third match in the cup was refereed by a "Premier League ref" who probably plays golf with Ron Noades.)

It has been brought to my attention that there are a number of golfers amongst our ranks. If you would be interested in a BCLASC golf day out in the summer, let me know, whatever standard of hacker or bandit you may be.

Welcome to all new BCLASC members. If anyone has any complaints, queries etc about the supporters club, please get in touch and I shall try to help
In the meantime. KEEP RIGHT ON, and I hope to see you at Orient, if not before.
Best Wishes

Jon. (0737 763 202)

...SOCCER NEWS.....SOCCER NEWS.....SOCCER NEWS.....SOCCER NEWS.....

Since the last newsheet was produced (10/12/91) our fortunes have continued to improve, with BCLASC football team unbeaten this year (1992). Here are the most recent results.

DATE	OPPOSITION	COMP'N	SCORE	SCORERS
8/12/91	ASTON VILLA LASC	"Friendly"	2 - 1	A.Oldroyd2
15/12/91	LEICESTER CITY LASC	League	4 - 3	D.Csondor,S.Powles2, R.Parkin
12/1/92	STOKE CITY LASC	League	5 - 2	S.Melville,J.Ruben2, D.Flynn, T.Phillips.
19/1/92	CARDIFF CITY LASC	League	3 - 2	M.Haidour,O.G., M.Hawkins
26/1/92	EIRE B LASC	League	5 - 2	A.Oldroyd3,B.Cronin, D.Csondor.

APFSCIL DIVISION III LEAGUE TABLE - AS AT 27TH JANUARY 1992

	Played	Points	Goal Diff.	Max. Pts Possible
Coventry City	10	16	+19	24
Bolton Wand.	11	13	+5	19
BIRMINGHAM CITY	**10**	**13**	**+3**	**21**
Cardiff City	10	11	+4	19
Eire B	10	9	-1	17
Stoke City	12	8	-24	12
Leicester City	11	6	-2	12
Sheffield Wed.	6	4	-4	20

Two points for a win. Top two go up. 14 games in the season.

REMAINING FIXTURES FOR SEASON 1991/92

DATE	MEET TIME	VENUE	OPPOSITION	COMP'N	
29/1/92	5.30 PM	White Hart Ln	HARRINGAY COUNCIL	Friendly	4-5
9/2/92	1.30 PM	Chiswick	COVENTRY CITY LASC	League	5-2
23/2/92	1.30 PM	W.Scrubs	BOLTON WANDS LASC	League	
1/3/92	1.30 PM	W.Scrubs	SHEFFIELD WED. LASC	League	
8/3/92	1.30 PM	Chiswick	CARDIFF CITY LASC	League	
22/3/92	1.30 PM	Chiswick	Norwegians?	Friendly	

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NOTES

1. Chiswick= Civil Service Sports Ground, nearest station is Barnes Bridge BR Station.
2. W.Scrubs= Wormwood Scrubs Playing Fields, nearest station is East Acton on the Central Line.
3. Bad Weather. In case of bad weather please call one of the contact people for information. Do not presume any game is called off.
4. Late call-offs. Please call one of the contact people if you have to cancel, no matter how late the call-off is.

FINALLY....WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR PLAYERS. SO IF YOU FANCY PLAYING, EVEN IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT EVERY WEEK, CONTACT US NOW!

LEICESTER CITY LASC 7 BCLASC 1

Despite Dave Csondor and Simon Powles making over 40 phone calls to members during the previous week, we managed to start this league match with only 7 (seven) players. After much debate about formations we elected for the old fashioned, but effective, 6-0-0.

We managed to hold them for 10 minutes before three goalkeeping errors produced three goals. By half time two more players had joined us and we felt quite agrieved to go in three-nil down.

We had chances in the second half to close the gap but it was getting particularly tough going especially when Leicester started bringing on substitutes. They scored four more before **MIKE DUFFY** got our consolation effort.

Many thanks to the nine who did turn up, but a plea to those who say they will and don't - please phone us (as early as possible) to let us know.

BLUES: Jessop(Guest), Powles, Matthews, Thomas, Brown, Duffy, Flynn, Lowther, Parkin.

Simon Powles

STOKE CITY LASC 0 BCLASC 3

Following some disappointing results, captain Dave Csondor was dropped for this league game against table toppers Stoke City, as Blues made the unusual, but brave, decision of starting with only nine men.

In the first half Blues looked particularly strong down the right side with Powles and O'Driscoll outstanding, and deservedly took the lead when **ANDY OLDROYD** bravely followed in a Declan Flynn shot. Then, moments after appearing to break his left leg, goalkeeper turned midfielder, **JOHN RUBEN** put us further ahead with a brilliant curling shot from near to the corner flag. Cries of 'You lucky Bastard, Ruben' were dispelled by John who convinced his team mates that he was not trying to cross to three unmarked players in the box and did mean to score.

Stoke introduced an eighty year old Stanley Matthews look-alike on their right wing but were still unable to break through Blues solid but tiring defence. Ruben, who had by now actually broken both legs, replaced Tony Philips in goal as we continued to push forward. And it was from a Philips corner that the lead was extended further, **JOHN KNIGHT** diving full length to power his header passed a stranded keeper.

With Knight hobbling for the last quarter it was left to his fellow defenders to keep the marauding Stoke forwards at bay. Mark Smith by now had Stanley Matthews in his pocket and Neil Matthews (no relation) hardly looked like a man who had run a half marathon that morning.

We hung on for a memorable first league win (ever!).

BLUES: Philips, Powles, Knight, Matthews N., Smith, O'Driscoll, Flynn, Ruben, Oldroyd.

Simon Powles & David O'Driscoll

REPORTS

We can't repeat the Villa score enough so here it is again for those who missed it the first time. The final match before Christmas versus Leicester City was supposed to be our easiest, but who said league form ever ran true. We seemed to be coasting in the first half, with strikes from CSONDOR (breaking his long barren spell) and POWLES twice. Every team has its unsung players and it is only fair that good finishing gets noticed and so I would like to tell you of Simon's contribution.

Leicester grabbed one back just before half-time to keep them interested. Worse was to follow in the second half when we conceded a second. Bang goes our Sunday afternoon stroll! However Richard PARKIN latched on to a through-ball to superbly chip the keeper to make it 4-2 (Mines a pint Richard). The second half flowed back and forwards and with the light rapidly deteriorating and fog closing in, the last ten minutes were played out in terrible conditions. Things got even more desparate when Leicester pulled another one back and we clung on for the last two minutes to register another two league points.

After the players had gorged themselves over the festive period we returned to action with an league encounter against Stoke at Chiswick. Against a below par Stoke we continued our winning run by racing into a 5 nil lead before allowing Stoke the luxury of two late consolation goals. Star performances came from Simon Melville and Matt Hawkins, whilst centre-forward for the day John Knight scored none. This was a David O'Driscoll production.

Our first game at the Scrubs in the new year was not eagerly awaited, but fortunately there was no bad weather and the pitch was only below average. The game was a poor one with Blues holding out for the first half, against the slope and wind, and turning around only one goal down. A second half fightback saw debut boy HAIDOUR equalise, before we let in a soft goal from a Cardiff free-kick. However two Blues goals in ten minutes settled the game, the first was a rifling drive from a Cardiff defender (a superb strike), and the second a good move finished off by a MATT HAWKINS shot.

Most recently of all we returned to the Scrubs for another away match, this time against Eire B, who we had only drew with before Xmas. Eire B started the game with only seven players and after only a couple of minutes OLDROYD shot past the keeper. 1 nil. Over elaboration around the penalty area cost us many strikes at goal, but those which were aimed at goal were often inaccurate or charged down by the wall of defenders facing us. Finally after repeated offensives OLDROYD prodded in our second. Eire B then gained their eighth player and even launched a couple of attacks. Two further reinforcements arrived shortly before half-time.

The second half saw mostly Blues pressure with several half chances created and missed. CSONDOR then latched onto a throughball from Flynn to put us four nil up. A BERNIE CRONIN power shot further extended our lead before Eire B grabbed some consolation with John Knight presenting one goal and David O'Driscoll getting his second own goal of the season. However despite not reaching double figures as expected we kept up our excellent run which is now extended to seven straight wins.

B C L A S C D A R T S T E A M

We made a late start to the 91/92 season due to the re-run of the 'Crystal Palace Story'. In many ways it would have been better if we had not started until 1992 ... or even later!

BARROW (away) 20th November 8 - 1

Team- Peter, Julie, Mark Smith, Tracey, Richard.
Mark Smith was our only winner in the singles.

BOURNMOUTH (away) 26th Nov. 9 - 0

Team- Tracey, Adrian.
The outcome of this 'match' was a foregone conclusion. Sadly we were let down at the last minute. In addition, unforeseen circumstances on the evening itself saw us lose our last hopes of a team!

GILLINGHAM (home) 11th Dec. 4 - 5

Team- Mark Brookfield, Tracey, Peter, Julie, Mark.
Mark B. and Peter won their singles, and we won a team game and the Doubles.

SWINDON (away) 16th Dec. 6 - 3

Team- Tracey, Peter, Julie, Chris, Peggy, Mark Shepherd, Mark Smith, Mark Brookfield, Adrian, Karen.

Swindon combined their home game with us for a Christmas Social. They gained revenge from last year's results, when we beat them. They insisted this year that they play the match before they began getting into the party mood (drinking?). What that says about our team considering this year's results, I'm not sure!

NEXT GAMES - Barrow (home) 28th Jan.
Bolton (home) 11th Feb.
Bournmouth (home) 25th Feb.

We have also entered the Knock-Out cup in February... anyone interested?

New players always welcome. Being able to play darts does not have any relevance to enjoying an evening out.

Tracey

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Social

TRACEY MITCHELL 081 543 0603

SOCIAL

Our (late) Christmas Social, 9th January at Shuttleworths Restaurant. We were joined by Louie Donowa and Simon Sturidge, and Simon's brother David. Dennis Bailey kindly joined us also.

It was an enjoyable evening, made more successful by over 30 members joining us this year. Many thanks to those members who joined us for the first time.

It was not our usual venue- we are usually to be found in the larger Shuttleworths near Aldwych. However, they did not anticipate our large turn-out and overbooked.

A wishful thought...
Having been given a provisional 'yes' by Terry Cooper in mid October, I had envisaged the lead up to the social being smooth running... but not so. As late as Tuesday, 7th Jan, I was liaising with St.Andrews to find out the exact names of our guests. Just one time, I would love to be able to tell our members when we send out the invitations. Next year....perhaps.
Personal thanks to St.Andrews' David Teague for his help.

Tracey

The Player of the Season for 1990/91 was awarded to Simon Sturridge on the pitch as usual. Thanks to Simon for his support, and for coming to our Christmas social.

Many thanks to everyone who came along in '91 to a social event. Also to Swindon Town, who entered into the spirit of things, and joined us for bowling/darts/socials and our Darts Invitation. Please continue to support our club.

If you have any ideas for a get-together in 1992, please let me know.

Whoever You Support We Support You

The footballing world is joining forces for the biggest charity initiative in the history of the game. "Football Against MS", aims to raise £3.5 Million in support for Action and Research for Multiple Sclerosis and will involve everybody at all levels within the game.

The focal point will be three simultaneous walks visiting every League club, plus some non-league clubs along the way in England, Scotland and Wales Players, staff and celebrities will walk between each club ground and supporters will be encouraged to raise money and walk with them. The FSA urge you to support this event and to get involved as much as you can.

Multiple Sclerosis can affect anybody - it is not hereditary. It can strike at anytime. It could affect someone you know - tomorrow

For further information contact ARMS at 4a Chapel Hill, Stansted, Essex or watch out for details that will appear just about everywhere.

The Football Supporters Association (FSA) was established in the mid 1980's in order to campaign for more supporter involvement in the running of football.

It now has many branches throughout England, Scotland and Wales and has had considerable success in changing the relationship between football supporters and the authorities.

During the last World Cup in Italy the FSA organised an 'embassy' which sought to enhance the image of British Football Supporters abroad and provide travel and accommodation services. Two thirds of English supporters used this service.

The FSA has also organised a whole series of campaigns around issues large and small. The most prominent of these was the campaign against compulsory identity card which involved the collection of 250,000 signatures.

Unlike the traditional supporters club, membership of the FSA is based on where you live rather than who you support. Therefore each branch comprises fans of many clubs, a structure ensuring that parochial loyalties do not undermine the organisation's effectiveness and credibility.

Annual membership is £6 (£3 for OAP's and under 16's, unemployed and students). Also available for an extra £2.50 (inc P+P) is a 1992 Supporters Diary which includes all league fixture lists for 91/92 season.

If you are concerned about all-seater stadia and the super league then you should join the FSA now.

Just complete the form below and send to FSA, PO Box 11, Liverpool, L26 1XP.

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(If renewal quote membership number)	**SEX : MALE/FEMALE**
Please print clearly	**DISABLED: NO/YES (sight,hearing,physical)**
SURNAME	**Membership (12 months) - £6.00**
FORENAME(S)	**Under 16, Students, Unwaged £3.00**
ADDRESS	**Europe - £7.00 Overseas - £12**
	Enclose cheque/postal order, send to :
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TEL: (inc STD)	**LIVERPOOL, L26 1XP**

IN THE BOOK

"IT'S TWELVE INCHES HIGH..." is almost the ultimate fanzine compilation. I say almost because there is no sign of Tired and Weary (nor a few other top fanzines) due to a stringent deadline.
The book is compiled by a fanzine editor and so has a more fanzine-style format, and unlike its predecessors among these fanzine compilations (El Tel was a Space Alien and Get Your Writs Out), it only has a couple of pages from each contributor.
A further recommendation for this book is its raison d'etre ie to raise money for the FOOTBALL AGAINST MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS charity which is currently sweeping the country. All proceeds go to FAMS, and if you buy it via mail order, more cash goes to them.
The book is available for £7.25 from
FSA, PO BOX 11,
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* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

There is no doubt that one man did more to entertain us during the decline of the Blues than any other.
That man is HARRY ROBERTS, and now he takes his place alongside Shakespeare (*) in the Halls of Great Literature.
His book is an epic tale of a man alone against a world of hate pain and more skillful wingers. It tells of a hero who in the face of adversity, rises to the very top of his profession and then causes everyone to re-evaluate the way they look at the game.
It becomes HARRY's GAME.
The book is actually auto-biographical, but filled with more old one-liners than Bernard Manning's night club.
Now take his wife...
"She could armwrestle a gorilla and pull a pint of Guinness at the same time."
"She had teeth like the stars (they came out at night)."

He passes irreverent comment on most of the people he has worked with, and the book makes interesting reading for its insights into Blues managers and players. Ron Saunders' motivation techniques cannot be repeated here, and John Bond comes in for some stick.
After Harry had broken his leg and was asked to take a 25% pay cut, he has this to say...
"My leg may have been broken, but my heart certainly wasn't when John Bond had the sack. In fact, it was one of the best parties I ve ever been to." (ADE)

Unable to make the trip up the M40, Santa Claus denied me the present on top of my Xmas list (ie. a signed picture of our victorious Wembley team. However he was thoughtful enough to slip into my stocking the best football book I have read in a long time. "All Played Out" by Pete Davies is the story of Italia 90, from the viewpoint of the author, who not only had direct access to the England squad, but had the "privelege" of travelling with the fans It gives a terrific insight into the personalities of some of our best players, and to the reasons behind the national press's appalling attitudes towards players, managers and supporters. (JON)

The BIRMINGHAM CITY Who's Who is a comprehensive list of all the players who've ever worn the Royal Blue, from the same people who brought us the Complete History. The format is easy to follow, with Blues statistics, career history and a brief description of the player.
It is the last bit which livens up the book, since interesting anecdotes are obviously more important. So Eamonn Dolan

*Craig Shakespeare that is.

gets twice as much space as Kevin Ashley because of his famous 'warming down' routines and his consequent trouble with the Law at several away games.
One amusing feature is the inclusion of nicknames, although why it has 'Gazzer' Pendrey and not 'Dodger' Rodgerson, or the obvious nickname of Ted Duckhouse is a mystery to me.
At the turn of the Century, nicknames were compulsory, with "Sconnie" Southall, "Nosey" Anderson, 'Soldier" Harvey and "Pecker"(!) Mountney among the contenders. With the Great War, things got a bit serious for a while, but the Twenties gave us "Tosher" Fillingham, "Nippy" Briggs. Jack "Cracker" Jones and of course "Lofty" Morrall
Again, a World War brought a brief end to the frivolity, although 'Salty' Halsall and "Slasher" Green made their names.
The Fifties saw a renaissance with "Spud" Murphy, "Ticker" Neal, "Tiny" Withers and the supreme Brian "Orrible" Orritt. We've never had it so good, said Harold MacMillan, and sure enough the Sixties players included "Ruby" Murray, "Sugar" Robinson and surely the two best nicknames in Blues history belonged to one man,
John Cornelius "Slogger" Slueewenhoek or "Tulip".
The more recent nicknames are rather dubious in origin, whoever called Willie Johnston "Bud" or John Trewick "Tucker"? But we could be about to enter another Golden Age. "Harry" Roberts, "Whoopee" Moran and "Bruno" Richards have all departed fairly recently, but we still have "Dodger", "Studger", "Foghorn", "Deano" and "(Axel) Foley".
So what do the players call each other, and what do YOU call them? Write to us at The Heathen, and let us know.

ARE YOU GOING UP?

It doesn't seem like three months since our memorable triumph over the Baggies at The Hawthorns Yet the return match will have been played by the time you read this, with both sides still at the top. Even though we have missed the chance to travel up to that game with the WBALSC, there will still be opportunity to join forces for a BR discount, since we usually play home games on the same day. The price of 11.50 is a bargain, so anyone not able to get a lift to Brum regularly might like to travel by train.
If any members are willing to share their car for future games can they please let me know.

RICHARD WILSON 0483 416 571

TICKETS
We have been very lucky recently, to receive our tickets direct from St.Andrews. But some members still seem to wake up the week before a match and expect tickets to be available. Please book your tickets in advance its easier to sell unwanted tickets than it is to get extra ones
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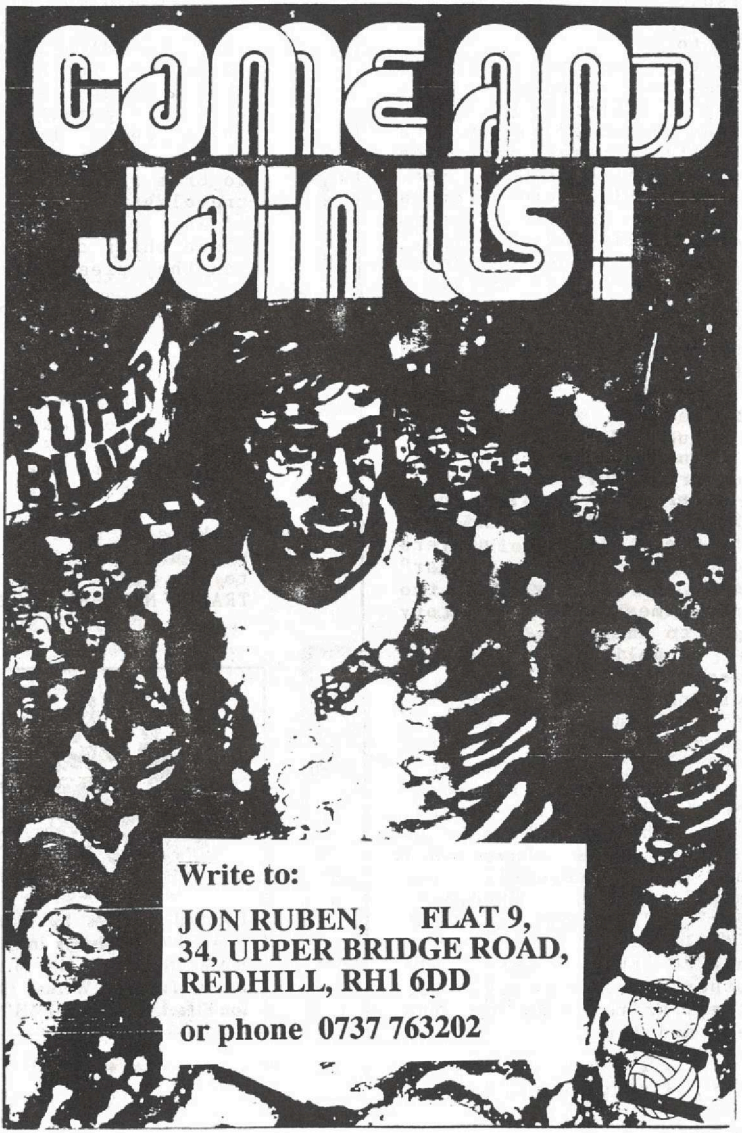

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4.50 standard £3·50 OAP/student £5·50 family or £5·00 overseas
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